DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 287 204 EA 019 702

AUTHOR Uhler, Sayre
TITLE Alternative Paths to Entry: New Jersey and Elsewhere.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987).
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Teachers; *Career Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Liberal Arts; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Qualifications; *Teacher Recruitment; *Teacher Shortage; Teacher Supply and Demand
IDENTIFIERS *Alternative Teacher Certification; *New Jersey

ABSTRACT

In 1983, New Jersey's governor, Tom Keane, proposed the Alternative Path to Certification as a means to alleviate the state's growing teacher shortage. At least 12 other states are now using similar plans to recruit teachers possessing liberal arts bachelor's degrees who have passed a standardized test and completed successfully a one-year supervised internship in a local school district. The plan allows recruitment of individuals without traditional teacher training, limits or eliminates emergency certificates, and provides new opportunities for candidates to enter the teaching profession before making other career commitments. Disadvantages include opening the profession to ill-prepared candidates, using a simplistic means to solve a major manpower problem (particularly in urban schools), and eroding pedagogical standards promulgated by higher education and state authorities. Growing demands for alternative path candidates have also emerged. More assessment is needed as alternatively certified teachers progress and as arrogant, pompous certification laws, which serve as barriers to bright liberal arts students, are challenged. The alternative path remains a significant response to today's teacher shortage. Whether it resolves or exacerbates that shortage remains a complex dilemma faced by schools everywhere. Included are 13 references. (Author/MLH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED287204

American Education Research Association

Annual Meeting Session

Tuesday, April 21, 1987, 4:05-6:05 PM, The Sheraton Ballroom, Sheraton Hotel, Washington, D.C.

Alternative Paths to Entry : New Jersey and Elsewhere

by

Sayre Uhler*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sayre Uhler

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Discussants

Dr. Sam Yarger, University of Wisconsin, College of Education, Endris Hall, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201.

Mr. Albert Shanker, President, American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue, NW, Washington, D. C. 20001.

Dr. Dennis J. O'Keeffe, 7 Ravensbourne Garden, Ealing, London, England W 13-8EW.

EA019202

April 1, 1987

*Dr. Sayre Uhler, Associate Professor of Administration, Policy, and Urban Education, Fordham University's Graduate School of Education at Lincoln Center, New York City, New York 10023. Ph: (212)841-5198.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Alternative Paths to Entry : New Jersey and Elsewhere

by

Sayre Uhler

Sayre Uhler

Associate Professor of Admisistration, Policy, and Urban Education at Fordham University's Graduate School of Education at Lincoln Center, New York City, New York 10023. Ph: (212)841-5198.

Contents

Section	Page
Abstract	1A
I. The Past is Future	2
II. The Alternative Path	3
III. The Growing Path	4
IV. The Virtues	5
V. The Sins	6
VI. The Future is Now	8
References	10

Alternative Paths to Entry : New Jersey and Elsewhere

by

Sayre Uhler*

ABSTRACT

New Jersey's Governor Tom Kean in 1983 proposed the Alternative Path to Certification as a means to alleviate the growing teacher shortage in the Graden State. Now, at least 12 states are using similar plans to recruit teachers possessing Liberal Arts bachelor's degrees, passing a standardized test, and completing successfully a one-year supervised internship in a local school district. Virtues of the plan include a new way to recruit teachers frequently unwilling or unable to engage in formal college training programs, a new means to limit and eliminate emergency certificates, and new opportunities for candidates to enter the teaching profession as transients prior to other life-long career commitments. Disadvantages include the opening of the profession entry level to ill-prepared candidates, simplistic means to solve a major manpower problem related to salaries and conditions of work faced by most schools today but particularly in urban centers, and clear deprication of pedagogical standards as promulgated by higher education requirements and state authorities through legislative mandates. Growing demand for Alternative Path candidates to enter the school management field has also emerged. The future is unknown as more states attempt variations of the Kean option. Needed now is more assessment of the performance of Alternative Path teachers as they impact upon classrooms and as the arrogance, pomposity, and certitude of all certification laws are challenged as barriers to many of the best and brightest Liberal Arts graduates to enter the school professions. As in the past, teacher shortages create responses from the institution which conflict with institutional priorities to upgrade qualifications and training levels of employees. The Alternative Path remains a significant response to today's teacher shortage. Whether it resolves or exacerbates that shortage remains a complex dilemma faced by all school reform movements.

---

* Dr. Sayre Uhler is Associate Professor of Administration, Policy, and Urban Education at Fordham University's Graduate School of Education at Lincoln Center, New York City, New York. (c)1987

I. The Past is Future

Over the years, teacher certification appears as a cyclical function of the marketplace. Supply and demand dictate the degree of access accorded individuals to join the ranks of educators who staff the nation's schoolhouses.

Every twenty years or so, a critical teacher shortage surfaces and causes an array of hiring, recruiting, training, and evaluation processes to become operable in order to satisfy demands to fill teacher vacancies existing in public school districts everywhere. Means to bypass established certification regualtions promulgated by state legislatures, school authorities, and university requirements to license teachers are suspended whenever the demand exceeds the supply. The 1980s just as the 1960s, the 1940s, and since the early days of Horace Mann in the 1840s, have produced demand-supply conditions which call for new means to staff growing vacancy slots in urban, suburban, and rural classrooms.

Emergency certifications, temporary assignments, part-time and flexible work schedules, teacher "cadets" and "interns", private enterprise staff partnerships, and importation of foreign teachers are historic means used by schools to fill empty classrooms. Today, we find "Alternative Certification" processes as a growing response to the present teacher shortage frustrating education employers in large and small school districts throughout America's communities.

Alternative Certification refers to teacher and even administrator certification programs operated by state and local school officials. It is, now, a significant and growing force in expanding the labor pool to meet the present teacher shortage cycle of the 1980s. Because of Alternative Certification opportunities, the control of entry into the education professions might never be the same as we contemplate the future of American education today.

II. The Alternative Path

New Jersey's Governor Tom Kean in December, 1983, introduced the concept of Alternative Certification as a quick response to his state's growing teacher shortage (1). As Chairman of the Commission of States, his posture as the originator of this new path to train and certify professional teachers earned nation-wide attention.

Under the Kean proposal, teacher candidates, instead of pursuing traditional teacher-training courses, would have the option of becoming certified by holding a bachelor's degree, passing a state-administered standardized test in the subject matter they plan to teach, and successfully completing a one-year supervised internship in a local school district.

The Kean proposal was aimed at killing the proliferation of emergency certificates plaguing schools in the Garden State. California and Texas joined New Jersey with similar statutes. Several other states conceived alternative teacher certification programs offered directly by local school districts especially in secondary schools (2).

Coupled with those provisions were other features to increase the supply of teachers. Minimum starting salaries were assured at the $18,500 level in 1985, the first year of implementation in New Jersey. [redacted] Further, local school districts were to contribute $2000 in-kind support for supervision of alternate path candidates and an additional $1850 was granted to each master teacher directly assigned to work with alternative path employees during the school year (3).

University and college-based teacher educators in eight state college centers were recruited to provide additional supervisory and training services to local school districts participating in Kean's plan (4). In 1986, twelve

regional training centers were established throughout higher education sites in New Jersey to provide on-going in-service direction and supervision (5).

III. The Growing Path

Participation in the Alternative Path has grown significantly since 1985 as data in New Jersey's 621 school districts are investigated. Thus, we note the following growth (6):

Dateline	# of Alternative Employees	Placement: % Elementary	% Secondary
September, 1985	121	23%	77%
June, 1986	186	30%	70%
September, 1986	198	44%	56%
March, 1987	287	47%	[illegible]

Traditionally, urban school districts in New Jersey and elsewhere have been forced to grant emergency certificates to fill vacancies at higher rates than found in neighboring suburban and rural centers for obvious reasons. Not surprising, therefore, are data revealing the location of Alternative Path candidates over the years. Two years ago, nearly 75% of all placements were in urban schools. Today, we find a different breakdown with only 42% of the 287 positions in urban centers. Newark with 72, East Orange with 22, Camden with 12, and Paterson and Trenton with 8 each show clearly that suburban and rural schools have emerged as the most likely locations of Alternative Path candidates. On March 1, 1987, 53 positions in New Jersey's most affluent school districts have been filled by Alternative Path candidates, a significant change since 1985 (7).

While the focus is changing towards growing numbers in elementary schools, Alternative Path candidates are increasingly filling nonurban school vacancies, particularly in wealthy suburban schools. Moreover, gross numbers of candidates will grow to 385 according to plans for the next school year. Beyond New Jersey,

17 state legislatures and state boards of education are contemplating Kean Alternative Path proposals including Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and California (8).

IV. The Virtues

Data regarding the issuance of emergency certifcates to fill vacancies in the nation's classrooms reveal startling conditions promoting the so-called Kean solution. Forty-eight states issue emergency certificates today (9). Overall, nearly 90,000 teachers hold such certificates and the highest concentrations of uncertified personnel include bilingual education, special education, computer science, vocational education, science, and math.

With such market conditions created by supply shortages, the Kean Alternative Path possesses clear virtues for hard-pressed teacher recruiters. They include:

A. A formal, stringent means to evaluate and supervise unqualified but potentially valuable teachers needed in classrooms everywhere.

B. A viable means to eliminate emergency certificates while controlling the quality of candidates and the enhancement of their training in real educational arenas.

C. The challenge to local school authorities to provide significant training and supervisory services to beginning teachers never before offered in such formal ways.

D. The expansion of long-needed clinical experiences so direly lacking in most teacher-preparation programs.

E. The unleashing of master teacher services in school units which have largely been untapped.

F. The elevation of master teacher personnel to perform professional roles in differentiated ways never before provided such valuable personnel.

G. The creation of significant partnerships between college and university teacher trainers, local practioners, and state education authorities responsible for continuous professional growth and in-service development of pedagogues throughout the nation's schoolhouses.

H. The valuable incentive to talented individuals to be attracted to the teaching profession without engaging in supposedly dull and tedious training programs.

I. The challenge to the teaching profession and its learned societies to revamp training programs by researching the very foundations of pedagogy and the elusive body of knowledge and skills that have generated much rhetoric but little hard evidence that such knowledge and skills exist as prerequisites to success in the profession.

J. The cultivation and implementation of manpower imperatives which elevate the idea that teaching for many is a transient occupation rather than a life-long employment commitment and should be engaged in from time-to-time depending upon market conditions and individual preferences.

V. The Sins

Emerging are voices from many quarters explicitly opposed to the Kean Alternative Path. Briefly, the sins of such certification alternatives can be enunciated as follows:

A. Denied and ignored is the treasury of research that indicates clearly a substantial body of knowledge and skills must be mastered in teacher training programs prior to entry into the pedagogical professions.

B. The assignment of serious professional duties to local practioners who are ill-prepared and unable to provide needed training and development experiences to neophytes.

C. The assumption that college and university-based training programs are not very valuable to new professionals as they enter the ranks of experienced teachers.

D. The cultivation of the idea that any warm body is better than no warm body to (staff man) classrooms where vacancies continue to exist, especially within urban school arenas.

E. The belief that parents and students as consumers of education services should not expect minimum quality controls to be placed on practioners who traditionally require governmental certification to practice their trade.

F. The unfounded assumption that emergency certification provisions are blatantly ineffective in meeting teacher shortages wherever they exist.

G. Compensation incentives to enhance teacher supplies will continue to be depricated as means to encourage talented and well-trained candidates to enter the teaching profession.

H. Tough urban school vacancies will automatically be filled despite existing data that indicate otherwise.

I. The lessons learned from "The Nation at Risk" are naught if we are supposed to improve the quality of teacher education programs while easily facilitating alternative paths which permit untrained to enter the teaching profession.

J. More talented and undecided college graduates will still be attracted to wealthy suburban and serene rural schoolhouses as certification requirements are waived in order to meet the ever-foreboding teacher shortage.

VI. The Future is Now

It is clear that the Alternative Path program in New Jersey and elsewhere across the nation will continue to flourish as a critical means to meet today's growing teacher shortage. Tom Kean continues as Governor of New Jersey. He is capitalizing on opportunities to solve the shortage as plans are made to increase to 400 the slots to be manned by liberal arts bachelor degree holders in 1987-88 (10). Governor Kean's stature as a school reformer grows and his leadership role increases as the "school problem" emerges as the top priority of domestic political issues in the 1988 presidential sweepstakes (11).

Governor Kean has turned to school administration as the next target of his school reform agenda. Pending is his proposal to certify school managers such as Principals and Superintendents from graduate programs far removed from traditional college-university training programs (12). Thus, any Master's program dealing with management sciences (MBA, for instance) will be allowed to provide candidates for school leadership roles while current state certification requirements are also waived.

In brief, professional education certification programs for teachers and administrators are being challenged in New Jersey and at least twelve other states. Despite the Holmes' Manifesto and the University Council on Education Administration proposal to expand certification and training requirements, the Alternative Paths proliferate. Local school discretion and control to select teachers and school managers are becoming national issues and priorities in the array of school reforms calling for resolution as manpower needs of public schools everywhere grow to critical proportions.

Perhaps the critical paths faced by the education professions as they contemplate real school reforms focus on eternal dilemmas related to staffing which calls for a combination of personnel options to select and recruit the best and the brightest today. The Alternative Paths to certification should be viewed with diligence and objectivity by all of us concerned with the pursuit of excellence in school performance.

Schools are and will continue to be centers of human resource applications wherein success is defined by the quality of people performance. Our historic devotion to pomposity, arrogance, and certitude about who should work in schools as teachers and managers on the basis of complex qualifications has proven to be simplistic and quite ineffective if we are to believe the rash of school studies which have been produced in the past decade or so.

The best and the brightest citizens need to be encouraged to enter the school professions today. That is obvious in 1987. The Alternative Paths are remarkable opportunities to discover what is best for children and youth as they journey through our schools. Let's withhold final judgments in the short-run until all the data are known and evaluated (13).

In the meantime, the education personnel shortage is real. As scholars and operators of the American school, we need to exhaust all human resource supplies in the marketplace and, for sure, the best and the brightest should be encouraged to enter the education professions. That's what the Alternative Path to Certification is all about. We should be grateful to Governor Kean and others for this opportunity to experiment and learn what is the best way to proceed in meeting today's growing personnel shortage faced by schools everywhere. Do we have another choice?

References

(1) "State to Name Panel to Explore Teacher Quality", The New York Times, Sunday, December 4, 1983, pp. 3-6.

(2) Martin Haberman, "Alternative Certification and Urban Schools, " Action in Teacher Education, VII, (Summer, 1986), pp. 13-18.

(3) "State Hails Alternative Teacher Route," The New York Times, Sunday, October 12, 1985, pp. 16-17.

(4) News Release, State of New Jersey, Department of Education, "Results of 'Alternative Route' Program Announced", December 3, 1986.

(5) Unpublished Report by Ellen Schechter, Division of Teacher Certification, March 20, 1987, New Jersey State Department of Education.

(6) Ibid.

(7) Ibid.

(8) Robert A. Roth, "Staffing Methods that Threaten the Teaching Profession," Phi Delta Kappan, LXVII, June, 1986, pp. 725-727.

(9) Ibid.

(10) Ellen Schechter, op. cit.

(11) Sayre Uhler, Commentary, The New York Times, Sunday, December 4, 1983, p. 6.

(12) Ellen Schechter, op. cit.

(13) Saul Cooperman, Commissioner of Education, State of New Jersey, Letter to School Districts, December 22, 1986. See also, Albert Shanker, "Where We Stand," New York Times, March 29, 1987, p. 9. For further developments, see "Training of School Officials Faulted in Education Report," The New York Times, Thursday, March 19, 1987, p. 14.